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C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 000173

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/12/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [AMGT](#) [GV](#)  
SUBJECT: SITREP 37: FEBRUARY 12, 2007, 2130

REF: CONAKRY 171 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: DCM Julie Winn, Reason 1.4(b,d)

¶1. (C) Guinea is under martial law. Appearing briefly on television and radio at just after 2000 local February 12, President Lansana Conte expressed his disappointment that when he had met union conditions for ending the general strike, people had in bad faith nonetheless caused disruption and resumed the strike. The announcer then read a decree that established a "state of siege," effective immediately and until February 23.

¶2. (C) Key elements of the decree include:  
-- establishment of a curfew against all traffic (vehicular and pedestrian) running from 0600 to 1600 and 2000 to 0600 (i.e. a window of 4 hours);  
-- provision that the military controls most police functions  
-- curtailment of freedom of the press, military authority to shut down print and broadcast media;  
-- right of the military to do search and seizure without notice, as well as to arrest anyone suspected of sedition or secret meetings;

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control of posts and telecommunications.

¶3. (C) The act seems to be outside the bounds of Guinea's constitution. Early indications are, nonetheless, that the military is zealous already. Airport Commandant called GSO at about 2045 to state that Army Chief of Staff General Kerfalla Camara had confirmed to him that no/no vehicles could circulate, including those of the U.S. Embassy, which was planning to meet and bring passengers to a military plane arriving morning of Tuesday, February 13. Hence, he said, he would not be opening the airport to us. Our contract guard service reports that military have told its roving supervisor/patrols to get off the roads now.

¶4. (C) Ambassador called Foreign Minister Conde immediately to stress Guinea's responsibilities towards diplomats under the Vienna Conventions. He emphasized that we had an aircraft coming in early the next morning, and that we must be able to reach it. He also said that our guard service must be able to circulate in order to protect U.S. personnel and properties effectively. Conde promised to try to reach Kerfalla.

¶5. (C) FM Conde subsequently called back to say he had failed to reach Kerfalla. He had spoken with Justice Minister Rene Alseny Gomes, however, who had confirmed to him that diplomatic vehicles and personnel were exempt from curfew. (Note: We do not intend to leave it there; we are seeking to speak directly to Kerfalla as soon as possible, in order to lay down our markers and to ensure he passes the word to the

airport commandant. End Note).

¶6. (C) FM Conde also told Ambassador that the civilian government remains in place. "The military has been given authority over domestic security," he said.

¶7. (C) French Ambassador is also pursuing efforts to ensure diplomats are not affected directly by this decree.

¶8. (C) DCM and others are at Embassy overnight. AMB was due to relieve at dawn.

MCDONALD